

LEAN PRINTING IN WEST MICHIGAN

ABOUT STAFFORD MEDIA SOLUTIONS. For nearly one hundred years, family-owned Stafford Media (www.go-stafford.com) has had a rich history of printing and publishing in Greenville, Michigan. Today, the company employs around 120 employees, publishing over one hundred titles on a weekly, monthly, and quarterly cycle. Stafford offers a full suite of printing solutions, from printing and publishing, to binding, mailing and production.

THE CHALLENGE. Stafford Media operates in the highly-competitive printing and publishing industry, where technology advances at lightning speeds and margins are tight. In order to compete, printing companies have to be extremely efficient throughout the production process. To remain competitive in the market, siblings Rob and Julie Stafford needed to improve team dynamics and build a more efficient workflow process. By streamlining and eliminating waste in production, the company could improve profitability and drive growth. The Staffords contacted the Lean training and coaching experts at Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center-West (The Center), a NIST MEP affiliate, to tackle the challenge.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Center staff developed a three-phase implementation project to establish a culture of Lean thinking and principles for Stafford Media: 1) Lean Executive Leadership Training, 2) Understanding Lean Principles, and 3) Implementing Lean Principles.

Phase 1 focused on executive leadership skills, including defining company processes for decision-making, prioritizing goals, developing action plans, reducing risks, and setting examples for the rest of the organization. The training provided a solid foundational understanding of Lean thinking and culture for Stafford Media's executive leadership team. In phase 2, The Center taught the same principles to the Stafford Media Solutions Team. This training incorporated hands-on manufacturing simulations where the proposed Lean improvements could be immediately tested and verified. Building on the knowledge from phase 2, The Center and Stafford Media worked together to analyze a specific area of the production process using Value Stream Mapping.

This direct application of Lean principles in phase 3 (learning by doing or knowledge transfer), strengthened the foundation on which Stafford Media will sustain its Lean strategy and identify additional improvement opportunities. The company is minimizing press errors and customer complaints, realizing savings, and increasing production efficiency by ensuring its continued success in Lean.

"The introduction of Lean practices in our workplace via Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center has made a positive impact on how we operate. Our team now thinks differently about how projects are handled—plus you can sense a positive vibe in our workforce."

-Rob Stafford, President

RESULTS



Savings of **\$28,000**



Increased production efficiency by **20%**



Reduced press errors by **43%**



Reduced in customer complaints by **57%**

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